

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1- 26. (Canceled)

27. (New) A process for the preparation of a colorant comprising the step of impregnating a high-absorption-capacity precipitated silica, optionally with a mean size of at least 50 μm , with an inorganic pigment in the form of a dissolved soluble salt.

28. (New) The process as claimed in claim 27, wherein said inorganic pigment is based on a metallic compound, optionally an iron compound.

29. (New) The process as claimed in claim 27, wherein said metallic compound is dissolved soluble iron sulfate, or a dissolved soluble iron nitrate.

30. (New) The process as claimed in claim 27, wherein said precipitated silica has a DOP oil uptake of at least 260 ml/100 g and, optionally, of at least 300 ml/100 g.

31. (New) The process as claimed in claim 27, wherein said precipitated silica is in the form of particles with a mean size of at least 50 μm .

32. (New) The process as claimed in claim 27, wherein said precipitated silica is in the form of substantially spherical beads.

33. (New) The process as claimed in claim 27, wherein said precipitated silica has a BET specific surface area of at least 50 m^2/g .

34. (New) The process as claimed in claim 27, wherein the impregnated silica obtained is further subjected to calcination and then optionally to grinding.
35. (New) The process as claimed in claim 34, wherein the calcination is performed at a temperature of between 600 and 1300°C.
36. (New) The process as claimed in claim 35, wherein the calcination is performed at a temperature of between 1000 and 1200°C.
37. (New) The process as claimed in claim 34, wherein the calcination is performed during at least 30 minutes.
38. (New) A colorant obtained by calcination, and then optional grinding, of a high-absorption-capacity precipitated silica, preimpregnated with an inorganic pigment in the form of a dissolved soluble salt.
39. (New) The colorant as claimed in claim 38, wherein said inorganic pigment is based on a metallic compound and, optionally, on an iron compound.
40. (New) The colorant as claimed in claim 39, wherein said metallic compound is dissolved soluble iron sulfate, or dissolved soluble iron nitrate.
41. (New) The colorant as claimed in claim 38, wherein said precipitated silica has a DOP oil uptake of at least 260 ml/100 g.
42. (New) The colorant as claimed in claim 38, wherein said precipitated silica is in the form of particles with a mean size of at least 50 µm.
43. (New) The colorant as claimed in claim 38, wherein said precipitated silica is in the form of substantially spherical beads.

- 44. (New) The colorant as claimed in claim 38 wherein said precipitated silica has a BET specific surface area of at least 50 m²/g.
- 45. (New) A ceramic material comprising at least one colorant as defined in claim 38.
- 46. (New) The ceramic material as claimed in claim 45, formed from sandstone.
- 47. (New) A roofing tile or paving tile, consisting of a ceramic material as defined in claim 45.
- 48. (New) A material containing hydraulic or asphalt binder, comprising at least one colorant as defined in claim 38.